



Record of Hearing
For The
Prairie Parkway
Corridor Protection

July 2002

Record of Hearing - Prairie Parkway - Corridor Protection

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Record of Hearing
For The
Prairie Parkway
Corridor Protection
Grundy, Kendall and Kane Counties

I. BACKGROUND

Need for Study

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) initiated a corridor feasibility study with Edwards and Kelcey, Inc., a transportation consulting firm, on March 19, 1999, as a proactive and responsible approach to address the growing demand for a north-south transportation corridor between Interstate 80 (I-80) and Interstate 88 (I-88). Commercial and residential development continues to occur rapidly south of I-88, particularly in the vicinity of Yorkville, Oswego, Montgomery and Aurora. It was recognized that if a corridor through the area was not protected soon, the ability to reasonably create a corridor - without considerable social or environmental impacts - would be lost. In time, continuing development in the area would also increase demand on the existing transportation resources.

The corridor feasibility study originated within the context of regional growth and future travel patterns. The purpose of the study was to identify and protect a corridor from I-80 to I-88 that would functionally address long-range travel needs within the Northeastern Illinois region, specifically in Grundy, Kendall and Kane counties and least disrupt existing socially and environmentally sensitive features.

Corridor Protection

The selected corridor will be protected from further development using the Corridor Protection process. Corridor Protection is a legal process that was added to the Illinois Highway Code (605 ILCS 5/4-510) in 1967. Corridor Protection was designed to "establish...the approximate locations and widths of rights of way for future additions to the State highway system to inform the public and prevent costly and conflicting development of the land involved." Corridor protection does not replace the in-depth analysis that is conducted in a Phase I engineering study.

The benefits of Corridor Protection include:

- Transportation agency involvement. Agencies can plan for the future knowing that right-of-way will be available by preventing costly and conflicting development.
- Traveling-public involvement. The traveling public is provided the opportunity to have transportation facilities available when they are needed.
- Cost efficiency. Future public facilities can be delivered more cost effectively.

- Local government involvement. Local bodies can develop land use plans with the knowledge of future transportation corridors.
- Property owner involvement. Property owners have knowledge that allows them to make informed decisions about affected property.
- Commercial and industrial planning. Businesses and industries can plan for future infrastructure that will service their needs.
- Environmental protection. Impacts to the environment will be minimized along the selected corridor. Without this protection, development may occur that could cause the corridor to be sited in a more environmentally sensitive area or needlessly involve additional developed areas.

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II. DECISION

The Department has determined that Corridor Protection is a necessary component of responsible transportation planning for this region and is in the best interest of the people of Illinois. The corridor identified for recording is generally described below and is definitively depicted on the Corridor Protection Map approved on July 24, 2002 and attached as Exhibit D.

The corridor:

- Connects to I-80 west of Minooka in Grundy County, north of Minooka Road.
- From I-80, it extends in a northwesterly direction and enters Kendall County near the intersection of Sherrill Road and O'Brien Road;
- At Grove Road, the corridor turns due west following the ½ section line to the north of Sherrill Road;
- West of Ashley Road, turns north and follows ½ section line ½ mile west of Ashley Road;
- One-half mile south of US 52, turns in a northwesterly direction and crosses US 52 east of the intersection of US 52 and IL 47 and IL 47 north of the intersection of US 52 and IL 47;
- West of IL 47, the corridor turns west and follows ½ section line ½ mile north of US 52 and Bushnell School Road;
- Three-quarters mile west of Lisbon Road, turns north to follow the Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) electrical transmission corridor north to approximately ½ mile south of IL 71;
- The corridor then moves and crosses IL 71 approximately ¼ mile west of High Point Road;
- The corridor continues north, paralleling High Point Road approximately ¼ mile to the west;
- Crosses the Fox River approximately 1/8 mile east of Blackhawk Road;
- Crosses Schaeffer Road approximately 1/8 mile east of Blackhawk Road and continues north-northwest to cross US 34 approximately ¼ mile east of Needham Road and continues west of the ComEd electrical transmission corridor from US 34 to north of the Menards Distribution Center;
- Northwest of Menards, the corridor turns north-northwest to cross east of the intersection of Rock Creek Road and Henning Road;
- Enters Kane County approximately 1/3 mile west of Clark Road;

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- Crosses Jones Road south of the intersection of Jones Road and Jericho Road and crosses Jericho Road approximately 5/8 mile north of the intersection of Jericho Road and Jones Road;
- Veers northeast and crosses the proposed extension of Dauberman Road between Granart Road and US 30;
- Crosses US 30 approximately 1/8 mile east of Dauberman Road then parallels Dauberman Road approximately 1/4 mile to the east;
- Crosses Wheeler Road approximately 1/4 mile east of Dauberman Road;
- Crosses Scott Road approximately 1/2 mile east of Dauberman Road;
- Crosses Lasher Road approximately 2/3 mile east of Dauberman road;
- The corridor crosses Harter Road approximately 2/3 mile northwest of the intersection of Harter Road and Seavey Road;
- Follows the north-south section line north to the intersection of Bateman Road and Main Street east of Kaneville;
- Connects to I-88, approximately 5/8 mile northwest of the Main Street overpass.

The land reserved for Corridor Protection is generally 400 feet wide. The 400-foot width was selected because it represents an appropriate width to accommodate various roadway types from arterials to freeways. In addition, the width is generally sufficient to accommodate construction in rolling terrain where some sections may require excavation or building up earth embankment. At locations where the corridor intersects US and state routes, the corridor is wider to accommodate potential necessary future interchanges.

III. STUDY PROCESS

Broad Corridor Identification

The study began with the collection of social and environmental data. Information was requested from local agencies and entities regarding incorporated urbanized areas, unincorporated developed areas, planned growth areas, planned open space areas, planned industrial areas, transportation services and utilities. Additionally, information was collected from existing databases on natural resources, historical resources, archaeological resources, CERCLIS sites and landfills, wetlands, water resources, Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species, Illinois Natural Area Inventory (INAI) sites, parks, forest preserves, nature preserves and flood plains. This information was updated throughout the study.

Although both the Kane County 2020 Transportation Plan and the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) 2020 Regional Transportation Plan identified a north-south transportation corridor in the area, one was not identified in the Kendall County Transportation Plan. While Kane County's plan identified the corridor as being located east of IL 47, the CATS' plan did not specify a location.

The information received was mapped into a single database and used as a base for analyzing potential broad corridors. From the analysis, three broad corridors were identified that provided functional linkages from I-80 to I-88 while avoiding

properties identified as parks, forest preserves and nature preserves. (Exhibit A details the three broad corridor configurations.)

Early in the study process, it was recognized that the Fox River area represented the most significant constraint in identifying feasible corridors. The established communities along the river – primarily Oswego, Yorkville and Plano – effectively prevented crossings in the boundaries of those communities. In addition, parks and other environmentally sensitive features located along the river outside the communities presented serious constraints for potential crossing locations. Thus, the number of available crossings of the river was restricted to four openings from Oswego to Millington. As a result, three Broad Corridors were developed utilizing the four river crossings.

The following are descriptions of the three Broad Corridors:

- The Western Corridor -- Connects to I-80 at Morris, then runs north to south of Lisbon Center. It then runs northwest to east of the Kendall/LaSalle County line, passing south of Helmar and crossing the Fox River between Millington and Millbrook. The corridor splits at the Fox River to avoid a T&E species creating two potential river crossings. From there, it proceeds north along the Kendall/LaSalle County line to north of Sandwich. The corridor then runs northeast to the Big Rock Creek basin, passing south and east of Little Rock. It continues North to I-88, passing east of Big Rock and Kaneville.
- The Central Corridor -- Connects to I-80, 2 miles west of Minooka. It then runs northwest to west of Helmar, passing south of Lisbon Center. From there, the corridor continues north to I-88, passing east of Silver Springs State Park, crossing the Fox River and then passing east of Plano, Big Rock and Kaneville.
- The Eastern Corridor -- Connects to I-80 from 2 miles west of Minooka, then runs northwest to 4 miles south of Plattville. It proceeds north to US 34, passing east of Plattville and west of the Waish-kee-shaw Reservation and Orchard Road. The corridor runs northwest to US 30, intersecting at a point 2 miles east of IL 47. It continues north to I-88, intersecting with IL 56 and Galena Road interchange then following the IL 56 alignment to I-88.

Broad Corridor Evaluation

- The Broad Western Corridor. This is the longest of the three broad corridors and would impact the highest total acreage. However, this corridor would have minimal impacts to existing houses and businesses. Existing adjacent land use is primarily agricultural except at US 34 in Sandwich, where commercial businesses line the road. Planned growth areas exist adjacent to US 34 and US 30. A refined corridor within this broad corridor would impact 0 to 6 residences and 1 to 2 businesses. The Western Corridor is inconsistent with the Kane County Land Resource Management Plan and it passes through the planned growth areas of Sandwich and Big Rock. This corridor's geometry presents non-direct vehicular travel because of the western and then eastern path around the Plano area. The northern intersection point with I-88 allows for future north

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expansion into undeveloped areas and minimal impacts to I-88. Due to its indirect path, this corridor does not provide the best opportunity to function as a beltway for the Chicago metropolitan area.

- The Broad Central Corridor -- The length and construction costs associated with this corridor fall in the middle range of the three broad corridors. Existing land use is primarily agricultural except for residences along the Fox River. The corridor goes through or is adjacent to planned growth areas from IL 71 to north of Plano and at US 30. A refined corridor would impact 0 to 6 residences. The corridor is inconsistent with the Kane County Land Resource Management Plan and passes through the planned growth areas of Yorkville, Plano and Big Rock. The south intersection point with I-80 provides for a good north-east travel flow and would provide for further southern travel through the use of I-55, located 7 miles east. The northern intersection point with I-88 allows for future north expansion into undeveloped areas and minimal impacts to I-88. This corridor provides good potential to function as a beltway for the Chicago metropolitan area.
- The Broad Eastern Corridor -- This is the shortest of the three broad corridors. Existing land use is agricultural from I-80 to IL 71 and north of US 30 to IL 56. It is residential and commercial from IL 71 to north of US 30 and residential from IL 56 to I-88. The corridor goes through or is adjacent to planned growth areas from IL 126 to I-88. Additionally, planned growth areas exist within five miles of the corridor from I-80 to IL 126. Land use is currently a mix of agricultural, residential and commercial. This corridor impacts the lowest total acreage. At the time of initial evaluation, it was determined that a refined corridor would impact 10 to 15 residences. The corridor is consistent with the Kane County Land Resource Management Plan; however, it passes through the planned growth areas of Yorkville, Oswego Montgomery and Sugar Grove. The south intersection point with I-80 provides for a good north-east travel flow and would provide for further southern travel through the use of I-55, located 7 miles east. The northern intersection point with I-88 does not allow for future north expansion due to the presence of North Aurora.

The Broad Central Corridor was selected as the preferred broad corridor because it was the least intrusive of the three while still offering the intended transportation benefit. More specifically, the Broad Central Corridor offered the following advantages:

- Good potential to function as a beltway for the Chicago metropolitan area;
- Good connectivity to I-80 and I-88;
- Minimizes impacts to homes and businesses; and
- Located close to developing area but not currently in them.

Broad Corridor Refinement

Refinement Process

Once the Broad Central Corridor was identified as the preferred broad corridor, it was further studied to define a narrower band for Corridor Protection. Plat maps and aerial photographs were utilized to adjust the corridor and minimize impacts. Information initially obtained in 1998 was supplemented with data gathered via a helicopter flight and aerial video in the summer of 2001 and numerous field reviews. The goals of this process were:

- Narrow the required width to a 400-foot-wide corridor
- Minimize environmental impacts
- Minimize impacts to developed areas and homes
- Minimize the number of properties involved
- Minimize severance of agricultural properties

Preparation of Corridor Protection Map

Based on the evaluations described, a Corridor Protection Map was developed which showed a 400-foot wide refined Central Corridor, the corridor's geometry and parcel boundaries, property identification numbers and property owners' names. This corridor protection map was presented for public comment.

Public Input

Public Hearing

Following procedures established under the Illinois Highway Code for Corridor Protection (605 ILCS 5/4-510), a public hearing was held on December 11, 2001. The three broad corridors and the Corridor Protection Map for the refined Central Corridor were presented and the Corridor Protection process was explained. A summary detailing the public hearing, public hearing materials and public comments is described in the [Prairie Parkway Corridor Protection Public Hearing Summary](#).

Corridor Modifications

Comments received through the public involvement process expressed an interest in modifying the Central Corridor and re-evaluating the Eastern Corridor's viability. In addition, the Kane County board submitted an alternate corridor for consideration that was a hybrid of the Central and Eastern Corridors. (Exhibit B shows the re-evaluated corridors) Many comments recommended that the corridor minimizes farm severances and follows both property/section lines and existing barriers, such as utility corridors. The following is a detailed account of the corridor evaluation and modification processes undertaken for the three corridors.

Eastern Corridor Re-Evaluation

In response to the issues raised during the public comment period, adjustments were made to the Eastern Corridor to minimize farm severances, follow existing property lines and ComEd's utility corridor. Since the communities of Montgomery, Oswego and Sugar Grove had been aggressively earmarking land for residential

development, the re-examination identified additional residential impacts and recently approved subdivision plats. Due to the associated social impacts, this corridor was found to be less viable for Corridor Protection than the Central Corridor.

Kane County Board Corridor

The Kane County Board submitted an alternative corridor – "the Kane County Compromise" - for consideration. This corridor follows the Central Corridor from I-80 to 1½ miles north of US 34. From this point the corridor turns east and follows the ComEd utility corridor to east of IL 47, then runs in a northeasterly direction to join IL 56 at Galena Road. From Galena Road it follows IL 56 to I-88. This corridor's geometry presents non-direct vehicular travel because of the western and then eastern path around the Yorkville area. It is consistent with the Kane County Land Resource Management Plan; however, Montgomery, Oswego and Sugar Grove have earmarked significant areas of eastern Kane County for residential subdivision development and this corridor bisects several of the proposed developments. Due to its indirect path providing less function as a Chicago metropolitan area beltway and impacts on planned development areas, this corridor was found to be less viable for Corridor Protection than the Central Corridor.

Central Corridor Modifications

The modified Central Corridor varies from the corridor presented at the public hearing in several areas. One of the strongest comments received from the public and thus the most apparent change is that the modified corridor reduces severances of agricultural properties. The corridor was adjusted to abut section lines and ComEd right-of-way for a greater portion of the corridor. In addition, segments of the corridor that originally ran diagonally across parcels were adjusted to a more north-south and east-west direction to minimize bisecting properties.

Specific changes in the corridor included:

- From I-80 north and west to US 52
 - The corridor was adjusted to avoid diagonal cuts across farmland and to follow section lines and ComEd corridor.
- US 52 to IL 71
 - The original separate interchanges at both US 52 and IL 47 were combined to reduce diagonal severances.
 - The corridor was adjusted to follow section lines and ComEd property lines.
- IL 71 to US 34, north and south of the Fox River
 - Adjusted corridor, at the request of property owner, to avoid forested area and take, rather than narrowly bypass, the owner's house.
- US 34 to US 30
 - Moved corridor west to avoid a constrained area along ComEd property.
 - Moved corridor east at US 30 to avoid the Dauberman Road intersection.
- US 30 to I-88
 - From Harter Road southeast of Kaneville to I-88, the corridor was moved eastward to minimize impacts to a large sod farming operation.

(Exhibit C shows compares the location of the original and final central corridor)

IV. SUMMARY AND APPROVAL

Summary

The following sets forth the basis for selecting the modified Central Corridor for Corridor Protection in Grundy, Kendall and Kane counties.

Central Corridor Modification Analysis

The decision to protect the modified Central Corridor alternative, versus other corridors, is based upon current regional conditions, local government plans, existing and proposed transportation facilities, natural resources, historical and archaeological resources, and utilities in the counties of Grundy, Kendall and Kane, as well as 2010 and 2020 plans for the region. Impacts on wetlands, water quality, threatened and endangered species, Illinois natural area inventory sites, parks, forest preserves and nature preserves have been evaluated and were avoided to the greatest extent possible to minimize any potential impacts. It is also based on information gathered from the public hearing on December 11, 2001, and other public informational meetings conducted on January 9, January 15, January 23, January 29, and January 31, 2002. The decision is also based on public and agency comments pertaining to Corridor Protection.

It should be noted that a key criterion of the selection of the initial corridor was to minimize impacts to established homesites and subdivisions. The modified corridor, while less intrusive on property severances, will affect more residences than the corridor presented at the public hearing. However, this alternative is still preferred since overwhelming public response from the farm community indicated that farmers were generally more concerned about severances of the farms than impacts to the individual farm houses.

The modified Central Corridor involves the property necessary for an approximately 35½ mile long roadway. The corridor provides for the connection to the major transportation routes of I-80 and I-88, as well as access to existing state and US highways.

Protection of the identified corridor at this time allows more efficient and less-intrusive implementation of a new highway from I-80 near Minooka (Grundy County) to I-88 near Kaneville (Kane County) at some time in the future.

As a part of this corridor protection approval, IDOT, in accordance with the language in 605 ILCS 5/4-510, will record the Corridor Protection Map with the Grundy, Kendall and Kane County Recorder's offices. Affected property owners will then be notified of the recording via registered US mail.

The corridor protection study is the initial stage in evaluating the need and location of a future highway to serve the region. The next step in the process would be a Phase I engineering study. This study would further evaluate the purpose, need and

the scope of the project and further analyze the social and environmental impacts of a future roadway. A study for this type of project would take from five to ten years.

Approval

In consideration of the all of the above, the Illinois Department of Transportation has based its decision to record the approved Corridor Protection Map based on:

- The recognized need for a future addition to the state highway system to provide for north-south transportation between I-80 and I-88 in Grundy, Kendall and Kane Counties,
- Analysis of the available corridor options, and
- Public comments received as a result of the December 11, 2001, public hearing and other public forums.


Kirk Brown
Secretary of Transportation

7/28/02
Date

Exhibits